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Wine
Water
and Song

Poems by

G. K. Chesterton

London
Methuen & Co. Ltd.

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Katharine Lee Bates

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WINE, WATER. AND SONG

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

CHARLES DICKENS
THE BALLAD OF THE WHITE HORSE
THE FLYING INN
ALL THINGS CONSIDERED
TREMENDOUS TRIFLES
ALARMS AND DISCURSIONS
A MISCELLANY OF MEN

WINE, WATER AND SONG

BY

G. K. CHESTERTON

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The Songs in this book are taken from "THE FLYING INN," with the exception of "The Song of the Strange Ascetic," which is here included by kind permission of the editor of *The New Witness*, where it originally appeared.

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WINE, WATER, AND SONG

The Englishman

ST. GEORGE he was for England,
And before he killed the dragon
He drank a pint of English ale
Out of an English flagon.
For though he fast right readily
In hair-shirt or in mail,
It isn't safe to give him cakes
Unless you give him ale.

WINE, WATER, AND SONG

St. George he was for England,
And right gallantly set free
The lady left for dragon's meat
And tied up to a tree;
But since he stood for England
And knew what England means,
Unless you give him bacon
You mustn't give him beans.

St. George he is for England,
And shall wear the shield he wore
When we go out in armour
With the battle-cross before.
But though he is jolly company
And very pleased to dine,
It isn't safe to give him nuts
Unless you give him wine.

Wine and Water

OLD Noah he had an ostrich farm and fowls on the largest scale,
He ate his egg with a ladle in an egg-cup big as a pail,
And the soup he took was Elephant Soup and the fish he took was Whale,

But they all were small to the cellar he took when he set out to sail,
And Noah he often said to his wife when he sat down to dine,
"I don't care where the water goes if it doesn't get into the wine."

The cataract of the cliff of heaven fell blinding off the brink
As if it would wash the stars away as suds go down a sink,
The seven heavens came roaring down for the throats of hell to drink,

WINE AND WATER

And Noah he cocked his eye and
said, "It looks like rain, I think,
The water has drowned the Matter-
horn as deep as a Mendip mine,
But I don't care where the water
goes if it doesn't get into the
wine."

But Noah he sinned, and we have
sinned; on tipsy feet we trod,
Till a great big black teetotaller
was sent to us for a rod,
And you can't get wine at a P.S.A.,
or chapel, or Eisteddfod,
For the Curse of Water has come
again because of the wrath of God,

And water is on the Bishop's
board and the Higher Thinker's
shrine,
But I don't care where the water
goes if it doesn't get into the
wine.

The Song Against Grocers

GOD made the wicked Grocer
For a mystery and a sign,
That men might shun the awful shops
And go to inns to dine;
Where the bacon's on the rafter
And the wine is in the wood,
And God that made good laughter
Has seen that they are good.

The evil-hearted Grocer
Would call his mother "Ma'am,"
And bow at her and bob at her,
Her aged soul to damn,
And rub his horrid hands and ask
What article was next,
Though *mortis in articulo*
Should be her proper text.

His props are not his children,
But pert lads underpaid,
Who call out "Cash!" and bang about
To work his wicked trade;
He keeps a lady in a cage
Most cruelly all day,

And makes her count and calls her
"Miss"
Until she fades away.

The righteous minds of innkeepers
Induce them now and then
To crack a bottle with a friend
Or treat unmoneyed men,
But who hath seen the Grocer
Treat housemaids to his teas
Or crack a bottle of fish-sauce
Or stand a man a cheese?

He sells us sands of Araby
As sugar for cash down;
He sweeps his shop and sells the
dust
The purest salt in town,

He crams with cans of poisoned
meat
Poor subjects of the King,
And when they die by thousands
Why, he laughs like anything.

The wicked Grocer groces
In spirits and in wine,
Not frankly and in fellowship
As men in inns do dine;
But packed with soap and sardines
And carried off by grooms,
For to be snatched by Duchesses
And drunk in dressing-rooms.

The hell-instructed Grocer
Has a temple made of tin,

THE SONG AGAINST GROCERS

And the ruin of good innkeepers
Is loudly urged therein ;
But now the sands are running out
From sugar of a sort,
The Grocer trembles ; for his time,
Just like his weight, is short.

The Rolling English Road

BEFORE the Roman came to
Rye or out to Severn strode,
The rolling English drunkard made
the rolling English road.
A reeling road, a rolling road, that
rambles round the shire,
And after him the parson ran, the
sexton and the squire;

THE ROLLING ENGLISH ROAD

A merry road, a mazy road, and such as we did tread
The night we went to Birmingham by way of Beachy Head.

I knew no harm of Bonaparte and plenty of the Squire,
And for to fight the Frenchman I did not much desire;
But I did bash their baggonets because they came arrayed
To straighten out the crooked road an English drunkard made,
Where you and I went down the lane with ale-mugs in our hands,
The night we went to Glastonbury by way of Goodwin Sands.

His sins they were forgiven him;
or why do flowers run
Behind him; and the hedges all
strengthing in the sun?
The wild thing went from left to right
and knew not which was which,
But the wild rose was above him when
they found him in the ditch.
God pardon us, nor harden us; we
did not see so clear
The night we went to Bannockburn
by way of Brighton Pier.

My friends, we will not go again
or ape an ancient rage,
Or stretch the folly of our youth
to be the shame of age,

But walk with clearer eyes and ears
this path that wandereth,
And see undrugged in evening light
the decent inn of death;
For there is good news yet to hear
and fine things to be seen,
Before we go to Paradise by way
of Kensal Green.

The Song of Quoodle

THEY haven't got no noses,
The fallen sons of Eve;
Even the smell of roses
Is not what they supposes;
But more than mind discloses
And more than men believe.

They haven't got no noses,
They cannot even tell

THE SONG OF QUOODLE

When door and darkness closes
The park a Jew encloses,
Where even the Law of Moses
Will let you steal a smell.

The brilliant smell of water,
The brave smell of a stone,
The smell of dew and thunder,
The old bones buried under,
Are things in which they blunder
And err, if left alone.

The wind from winter forests,
The scent of scentless flowers,
The breath of brides' adorning,
The smell of snare and warning,

The smell of Sunday morning,
God gave to us for ours.

. . . . . .

And Quoodle here discloses
All things that Quoodle can,
They haven't got no noses,
They haven't got no noses,
And goodness only knowses
The Noselessness of Man.

Pioneers, O Pioneers

NEBUCHADNEZZAR the King of the Jews
Suffered from new and original views,
He crawled on his hands and knees, it's said,
With grass in his mouth and a crown on his head.
With a wowtyiddly, etc.

Those in traditional paths that trod
Thought the thing was a curse from God,
But a Pioneer men always abuse
Like Nebuchadnezzar the King of the Jews.

Black Lord Foulon the Frenchman slew
Thought it a Futurist thing to do.
He offered them grass instead of bread.
So they stuffed him with grass when they cut off his head.
With a wowtyiddly, etc.

For the pride of his soul he perished then—
But of course it is always of Pride that men,
A Man in Advance of his Age accuse,
Like Nebuchadnezzar the King of the Jews.

Simeon Scudder of Styx, in Maine,
Thought of the thing and was at it again.
He gave good grass and water in pails
To a thousand Irishmen hammering rails.

With a wowtyiddly, etc.

Appetites differ ; and tied to a stake
He was tarred and feathered for
Conscience' Sake.
But stoning the prophets is ancient
news,
Like Nebuchadnezzar the King of
the Jews.

The Logical Vegetarian

"Why shouldn't I have a purely vegetarian drink? Why shouldn't I take vegetables in their highest form, so to speak? The modest vegetarians ought obviously to stick to wine or beer, plain vegetarian drinks, instead of filling their goblets with the blood of bulls and elephants, as all conventional meat-eaters do, I suppose."—DALROY.

YOU will find me drinking rum,
Like a sailor in a slum,
You will find me drinking beer like
a Bavarian.
You will find me drinking gin
In the lowest kind of inn,
Because I am a rigid Vegetarian.

So I cleared the inn of wine,
And I tried to climb the sign,
And I tried to hail the constable as
"Marion."
But he said I couldn't speak,
And he bowled me to the Beak
Because I was a Happy Vegetarian.

Oh, I knew a Doctor Gluck,
And his nose it had a hook,
And his attitudes were anything but
Aryan;
So I gave him all the pork
That I had, upon a fork;
Because I am myself a Vegetarian.

THE LOGICAL VEGETARIAN

I am silent in the Club,
I am silent in the pub.,
I am silent on a bally peak in
Darien ;
For I stuff away for life
Shoving peas in with a knife,
Because I am at heart a Vegetarian.

No more the milk of cows
Shall pollute my private house
Than the milk of the wild mares of
the Barbarian ;
I will stick to port and sherry,
For they are so very, very,
So very, very, very Vegetarian.

"The Saracen's Head"

"THE Saracen's Head" looks
down the lane,
Where we shall never drink wine
again,
For the wicked old women who feel
well-bred
Have turned to a tea-shop "The
Saracen's Head."

"THE SARACEN'S HEAD"

"The Saracen's Head" out of Araby came,
King Richard riding in arms like flame,
And where he established his folk to be fed
He set up a spear—and the Saracen's Head.

But "The Saracen's Head" outlived the Kings,
It thought and it thought of most horrible things,
Of Health and of Soap and of Standard Bread,
And of Saracen drinks at "The Saracen's Head."

So "The Saracen's Head" fulfils its
name,
They drink no wine—a ridiculous
game—
And I shall wonder until I'm dead,
How it ever came into the Saracen's
Head.

The Good Rich Man

MR. MANDRAGON, the Millionaire, he wouldn't have wine or wife,
He couldn't endure complexity: he lived the Simple Life.
He ordered his lunch by megaphone in manly, simple tones,
And used all his motors for canvassing voters, and twenty telephones;

Besides a dandy little machine,
Cunning and neat as ever was seen,
With a hundred pulleys and cranks between,
Made of metal and kept quite clean,
To hoist him out of his healthful bed on every day of his life,
And wash him and dress him and shave him and brush him
—to live the Simple Life.

Mr. Mandragon was most refined and quietly, neatly dressed,
Say all the American newspapers that know refinement best;

THE GOOD RICH MAN

Quiet and neat the hat and hair
and the coat quiet and neat,
A trouser worn upon either leg,
while boots adorn the feet;
And not, as any one would expect,
A Tiger's Skin all striped and
specked,
And a Peacock Hat with the tail erect,
A scarlet tunic with sunflowers
decked,
Which might have had a more
marked effect,
And pleased the pride of a weaker
man that yearned for wine or wife;
But Fame and the Flagon, for Mr.
Mandragon
—obscured the Simple Life.

Mr. Mandragon, the Millionaire, I
am happy to say, is dead;
He enjoyed a quiet funeral in a
Crematorium shed.
And he lies there fluffy and soft
and grey and certainly quite
refined;
When he might have rotted to
flowers and fruit with Adam and
all mankind,
Or been eaten by wolves athirst for
blood,
Or burnt on a good tall pyre of
wood,
In a towering flame, as a heathen
should,
Or even sat with us here at food,

THE GOOD RICH MAN

Merrily taking twopenny ale and
pork with a pocket-knife ;
But this was luxury not for one
that went for the Simple Life.

The Song Against Songs

THE song of the sorrow of
Melisande is a weary song
and a dreary song,
The glory of Mariana's grange had
got into great decay,
The song of the Raven Never More
has never been called a cheery
song,
And the brightest things in Baude-
laire are anything else but gay.

THE SONG AGAINST SONGS

But who will write us a riding
song
Or a hunting song or a drinking
song,
Fit for them that arose and rode
When day and the wine were red?
But bring me a quart of claret
out,
And I will write you a clinking
song,
A song of war and a song of wine
And a song to wake the dead.

The song of the fury of Fragolette
is a florid song and a torrid song,
The song of the sorrow of Tara is
sung to a harp unstrung,

WINE, WATER, AND SONG

The song of the cheerful Shropshire
Lad I consider a perfectly horrid
song,
And the song of the happy Futurist
is a song that can't be sung.

But who will write us a riding song
Or a fighting song or a drinking song,
Fit for the fathers of you and me,
That knew how to think and
thrive ?
But the song of Beauty and Art
and Love
Is simply an utterly stinking song,
To double you up and drag you down
And damn your soul alive.

Me Heart

I COME from Castlepatrick, and
me heart is on me sleeve,
And any sword or pistol boy can
hit it with me leave,
It shines there for an epaulette, as
golden as a flame,
As naked as me ancestors, as noble
as me name.

For I come from Castlepatrick, and me heart is on me sleeve,
But a lady stole it from me on St. Gallowglass's Eve.

The folk that live in Liverpool, their heart is in their boots;
They go to hell like lambs, they do, because the hooter hoots.
Where men may not be dancin', though the wheels may dance all day;
And men may not be smokin'; but only chimneys may.

ME HEART

But I come from Castlepatrick, and
me heart is on me sleeve,
But a lady stole it from me on
St. Poleander's Eve.

The folk that live in black Belfast,
their heart is in their mouth,
They see us making murders in the
meadows of the South ;
They think a plough's a rack, they
do, and cattle-calls are creeds,
And they think we're burnin'
witches when we're only burnin
weeds ;

But I come from Castlepatrick, and
me heart is on me sleeve;
But a lady stole it from me on
St. Barnabas's Eve.

The Song of the Oak

THE Druids waved their golden knives
And danced around the Oak
When they had sacrificed a man;
But though the learned search and scan,
No single modern person can
Entirely see the joke.
But though they cut the throats of men
They cut not down the tree,

And from the blood the saplings
sprang
Of oak-woods yet to be.
But Ivywood, Lord Ivywood,
He rots the tree as ivy would,
He clings and crawls as ivy would
About the sacred tree.

King Charles he fled from Worcester
fight
And hid him in an Oak;
In convent schools no man of tact
Would trace and praise his every
act,
Or argue that he was in fact
A strict and sainted bloke,

But not by him the sacred woods
Have lost their fancies free,
And though he was extremely big
He did not break the tree.
  But Ivywood, Lord Ivywood,
  He breaks the tree as ivy would,
  And eats the woods as ivy would
  Between us and the sea.

Great Collingwood walked down the glade
And flung the acorns free,
That oaks might still be in the grove
As oaken as the beams above,
When the great Lover sailors love

Was kissed by Death at sea.
But though for him the oak-trees fell
To build the oaken ships,
The woodman worshipped what he smote
And honoured even the chips.
But Ivywood, Lord Ivywood,
He hates the tree as ivy would,
As the dragon of the ivy would
That has us in his grips.

The Road to Roundabout

SOME say that Guy of Warwick,
The man that killed the Cow
And brake the mighty Boar alive
Beyond the Bridge at Slough;
Went up against a Loathly Worm
That wasted all the Downs,
And so the roads they twist and
squirm
(If I may be allowed the term)

From the writhing of the stricken
Worm
That died in seven towns.
I see no scientific proof
That this idea is sound,
And I should say they wound
about
To find the town of Roundabout,
The merry town of Roundabout,
That makes the world go round.

Some say that Robin Goodfellow,
Whose lantern lights the meads
(To steal a phrase Sir Walter Scott
In heaven no longer needs),
Such dance around the trysting-place
The moonstruck lover leads;

Which superstition I should scout
There is more faith in honest doubt
(As Tennyson has pointed out)
Than in those nasty creeds.
But peace and righteousness (St. John)
In Roundabout can kiss,
And since that's all that's found about
The pleasant town of Roundabout,
The roads they simply bound about
To find out where it is.

Some say that when Sir Lancelot
Went forth to find the Grail,
Grey Merlin wrinkled up the roads
For hope that he should fail;

All roads led back to Lyonesse
And Camelot in the Vale,
I cannot yield assent to this
Extravagant hypothesis,
The plain, shrewd Briton will dismiss
Such rumours (*Daily Mail*).
  But in the streets of Roundabout
  Are no such factions found,
  Or theories to expound about,
  Or roll upon the ground about,
  In the happy town of Roundabout,
  That makes the world go round.

The Song of the Strange Ascetic

IF I had been a Heathen,
I'd have praised the purple vine,
My slaves should dig the vineyards,
And I would drink the wine
But Higgins is a Heathen,
And his slaves grow lean and grey,
That he may drink some tepid milk
Exactly twice a day.

If I had been a Heathen,
I'd have crowned Neœra's curls,
And filled my life with love affairs,
My house with dancing girls;
But Higgins is a Heathen,
And to lecture rooms is forced,
Where his aunts, who are not married,
Demand to be divorced.

If I had been a Heathen,
I'd have sent my armies forth,
And dragged behind my chariots
The Chieftains of the North.
But Higgins is a Heathen,
And he drives the dreary quill,
To lend the poor that funny cash
That makes them poorer still.

SONG OF STRANGE ASCETIC

If I had been a Heathen,
  I'd have piled my pyre on high,
And in a great red whirlwind
  Gone roaring to the sky;
But Higgins is a Heathen,
  And a richer man than I;
And they put him in an oven,
  Just as if he were a pie.

Now who that runs can read it,
  The riddle that I write,
Of why this poor old sinner,
  Should sin without delight—?
But I, I cannot read it
  (Although I run and run),
Of them that do not have the faith,
  And will not have the fun.

The Song of Right and Wrong

FEAST on wine or fast on water,
And your honour shall stand sure,
God Almighty's son and daughter
He the valiant, she the pure;
If an angel out of heaven
Brings you other things to drink,
Thank him for his kind attentions,
Go and pour them down the sink.

SONG OF RIGHT AND WRONG

Tea is like the East he grows in,
A great yellow Mandarin
With urbanity of manner
And unconsciousness of sin;
All the women, like a harem,
At his pig-tail troop along;
And, like all the East he grows in,
He is Poison when he's strong.

Tea, although an Oriental,
Is a gentleman at least;
Cocoa is a cad and coward,
Cocoa is a vulgar beast,
Cocoa is a dull, disloyal,
Lying, crawling cad and clown,
And may very well be grateful
To the fool that takes him down.

WINE, WATER, AND SONG

As for all the windy waters,
They were rained like tempests down
When good drink had been dishonoured
By the tipplers of the town;
When red wine had brought red ruin
And the death-dance of our times,
Heaven sent us Soda Water
As a torment for our crimes.

Who Goes Home?

IN the city set upon slime and loam
They cry in their parliament "Who goes home?"
And there comes no answer in arch or dome,
For none in the city of graves goes home.
Yet these shall perish and understand,
For God has pity on this great land.

WINE, WATER, AND SONG

Men that are men again ; who goes
home ?
Tocsin and trumpeter ! Who goes
home ?
For there's blood on the field and
blood on the foam
And blood on the body when Man
goes home.
And a voice valedictory. . . . Who
is for Victory ?
Who is for Liberty ? Who goes
home ?

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